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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 07 ANKARA 004504

SIPDIS

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DEPARTMENT FOR INR/IC/TIPOFF, CA/VO/L/C

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SUBJECT: TIP IN TURKEY: AUSTRALIAN INVESTIGATION REPORT II

REF: A. ANKARA 4502

[B](#). ANKARA 4503

(U) Classified by Polcounselor John Kunstadter; reasons: 1.4
(b,d).

[1](#). (C) The following confidential investigation report compiled by Australian Federal Police (AFP) agent Shawn Selles includes names and contact information for suspected human smugglers described in reftel.

TURKISH-BASED PEOPLE SMUGGLING NETWORK OPERATING TO AUSTRALIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

Scope of Operation SALVINI
Mission

To disrupt and dismantle Turkish people smuggling networks targeting Australia as a destination through the successful prosecution of offenders in Australia, Turkey, and elsewhere.

Scope/Status

As of July 2004, the following offenders were being pursued by the PSST as part of the scope of Operation SALVINI (in order of priority):

Mehmet SERIBAN born 1 January 1965

Arrested on 25 March 2003 by PSST members, Mehmet is charged for his alleged involvements in the "Ord", "Warrego", "Isa" "Tabletop", "Gnowangerup", and "SIEV 14", illegal boat arrivals. Although alleged to have participated in other illegal boat arrivals, additional charges are not being pursued re practical considerations.

Ali CETIN born 1 January 1963

Investigations are continuing for his alleged involvement in the "SIEV 14" illegal boat arrival. He currently resides in Sydney (obtained Australian citizenship).

Eyup BASAR born 5 July 1971

Investigations are continuing for his alleged involvement in the "SIEV 14" illegal boat arrival. He is also implicated in the "SIEV 06 - Draco" boat arrival. Eyup resides in Indonesia. An Interpol Blue Notice has been requested.

Muslim SERIBAN born 5 January 1957

Investigations are continuing for his alleged involvement in the "Ord", "Isa", "Tabletop" illegal boat arrivals. He is believed to be residing in Gaziantep, Turkey. An Interpol Blue Notice has been requested.

Bayram ASLAN (no further details)

Investigations are continuing for his alleged involvement in the "SIEV 14" boat arrival. He was reported to have been arrested by the Turkish Police. A recent unconfirmed report indicates that he broke bail and fled to Korea.

"Huseyin" (no further details)

Enquiries to identify this person are continuing and his alleged involvement in the "SIEV 06" and "SIEV 14" boat arrivals will be investigated.

Murat and Hakan KARAOGU - Karaoglu Turizm

Investigations are continuing for their alleged involvement in several SIEVs. Recent enquiries (July 2004) have revealed that Karaoglu Turizm is still operating in Gaziantep.

Other Turkish persons of interest (not including witnesses) to this investigation include:

Garip BUKDADI

Enquiries are continuing into his alleged connections to Mehmet SERIBAN. He is believed to reside in Indonesia. Investigations are continuing into his attempted to use Mehmet SERIBAN's Australian passport to illegally enter Canada from Indonesia in April 2004 (where he was stopped from doing so by Australian immigration officials). Recent information (late June 2004) indicates that Garip Bukdadi and a person by the name of 'Muhmud' (no further details) had received an unnamed number of Turkish PII's in Jakarta. These Turks were of Kurdish ethnicity and had come to Indonesia via Thailand. Their intended destination is not

known at this time.

Sebahattin AKKUS (no further details) aka "Murat"
Allegedly organised the "Roger" vessel in 1995 on which
Mehmet SERIBAN arrived. This is not a PSST investigation
priority at this time.

In addition to the above persons, there are a number of
Turkish-born Australians and also Indonesian persons of
interest who have been associated with this network. The
details of these persons are held on PSST indices.
Brief Profiles

Mehmet SERIBAN
(Department of Immigration photograph - 1995)
Mehmet SERIBAN born 1/1/65 at Araban, Turkey to Ayse (f) and
Kadir (m) SERIBAN, was the principal member of this network
operating in Indonesia. He used a range of aliases to
specifically confuse law enforcement authorities in their
dealings with PIIs. These aliases include:

Mehmet KOSEN 1/4/1974 (has Turkish and Indonesian
identity cards)

"Irani Aziz" / "Iran Aziz";
"Iraqi Hassan";
"Ramazan Iskendurun";
"Mes" (Indonesian nickname); and
"Max" (Indonesian nickname).

Mehmet himself arrived illegally in Australia on the
"Rosella" boat in 1995. He claimed at the time that his
smuggler was a person by the name of "Murat". During a
recent interview with PSST members he identified this "Murat"
as Sebahattin AKKUS (no further details). Mehmet also
indicated that he has not seen AKKUS for some time although
he has heard that AKKUS is smuggling people to Germany.
Mehmet sought refugee status in Australia citing pressure
from both the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and the Turkish
Government in the context of the then ongoing conflict
between the two parties as the reason behind his claim. He
stated to Immigration officials that he is of Kurdish
ethnicity himself, but he cannot speak Kurdish. Later HS
information indicated that Mehmet was not Kurdish and had
said he was Kurdish to strengthen his case for refugee
status. He was married in Turkey to Derya SERIBAN 29/6/75 an
unknown time before his arrival in Australia. After Mehmet
had obtained an Australian protection visa, Derya applied for
permanent residency, which Mehmet sponsored. This was
granted and she came to Australia in November 1997. Later HS
information indicated that Derya had paid Mehmet \$20-25,000
USD to get her to Australia. These allegations were
investigated by Australian immigration officials but there
was insufficient evidence.

Mehmet was successful in obtaining Australian citizenship in
1998. He left Australia on 10 October 1998 on an Australian
passport (L6806139) for Indonesia where he lived in Bandung
for a number of years. Mehmet has told PSST officials he
owns the Hotel Menteng 1 and Hotel Menteng 2 in Jakarta.
Both of these hotels were used as the principal accommodation
for PIIs for the majority of SIEVs organised. Mehmet himself
stayed there prior to illegally entering Australia in 1995.
He has never returned to Australia, being aware of law
enforcement interest in his activities, but in March 2004 was
deported for immigration offences to Australia and arrested.
He is currently facing several people smuggling offences in
Australia. Proceeds of Crime, action is anticipated. In
addition to the above two hotels, HS information suggests
that Mehmet holds \$700,000 AUD in an Australian bank account
based in Indonesia under a false name but is not able to get
the money out. Enquiries are continuing.

Mehmet,s involvement in the network was to fully organise
the logistical arrangements for the PIIs in Indonesia. These
activities included meeting the PIIs on arrival; obtaining
the majority payment for the venture from the PIIs;
accommodation, transport, food and entertainment for the
PIIs; collecting passports and return airline tickets from
the PIIs; and arranging the Indonesian vessel and crew to
take the PIIs to Australia including payment for the vessel.
He is 160cm tall, 55 kgs, slim build, has brown hair
(sometimes dyed) and brown eyes. He can speak reasonable
Indonesian and a little English.

Ali CETIN
(Australian Passport Photograph - 2001)

Ali CETIN was born 1 January 1963 in Saraykoy, Turkey and
lived in Yazica village near Adiyaman. Ali is also recorded
on Australian immigration indices as having the date of birth
22 December 1963. He first entered Australia on 8 March 1981
as a visitor on a three month visa. He was apprehended in
Sydney on 23 June 1981 for overstaying his visa by
immigration officials who were acting on information supplied
by CETIN,s sister,s estranged husband that Ali CETIN was
residing in the roof of his sister,s house. Ali CETIN was

subsequently deported to Turkey on 6 July 1981.

On 30 November 1998 Ali CETIN, together with Vakkas SERIBAN and Muslim SERIBAN (older brothers of Mehmet SERIBAN) illegally entered Australia on the SIEV "Ord" at Ashmore Reef. He claimed his smuggler was Ramazan AZIZ (alias for SERIBAN). He sought refugee status claiming that he was pressured by the PKK and Turkish Government to assist their respective sides in their conflict (eg, similar story to Mehmet SERIBAN). He was given a protection visa and later obtained Australian citizenship on 18 May 2001. He can speak Turkish, Kurdish and a little English.

CETIN,s wife, Nezahat CETIN born 24 February 1971 and three children (2 x daughter and 1 x son) arrived in Australia on 28 November 1999 having been sponsored by Ali CETIN. His family have since all obtained Australian citizenship. Ali and Nezahat are now separated but still run their business together, a kebab shop in Mosman, Sydney.

Ali CETIN appears to have had a major role in the SIEV 14 venture and worked with both Mehmet SERIBAN and Bayram ASLAN in Indonesia and Turkey. This is confirmed by six statements from the SIEV 14 PIIs which were obtained by the local Adiyaman Police and received by the PSST via the Ministry of Justice. These statements show Bayram ASLAN and Ali CETIN were the first point of contact by those six PIIs. Two of those PIIs met Ali CETIN personally in Turkey (movement records show that Ali CETIN left Australia for Turkey between 9 June and 16 July 2003) whilst other witnesses indicate talking to him over the phone at the behest of Bayram. Most indicated they met him in Indonesia (movement records show travel to Indonesia between 21 to 28 August 2003 and 8 to 27 October 2003).

Ali,s marketed Australia as a destination and also promised the PIIs work in Australia saying that he needed workers for his restaurant in Australia and could pay them \$7,000 to \$10,000 USD a month. Ali also convinced those persons to trust Bayram ASLAN to make the arrangements to get them to Indonesia. Ali then indicated he would assist them getting from Indonesia to Australia. While Mehmet SERIBAN and Bayram ASLAN received the majority of payments by the PIIs for this venture, Ali is calculated to have received several thousand USD for his role (the exact amount is difficult to determine). The PSST has financial information which corroborates some transfer of money between Bayram ASLAN and Ali CETIN. During the course of the investigation, the PSST has been receiving consistent information from the SIEV 14 PII,s that Ali CETIN and his relatives in Turkey have been, and still are, attempting to threaten and bribe the witnesses in return for favourable statements / testimony to the Australian authorities. The PSST continues to investigate Ali CETIN,s involvement in this matter (eg, allegations of witness interference).

Eyup Basar
(Department of Immigration photograph - 1999)

Eyup BASAR was born on 5 July 1971 in Gaziantep Turkey to Omer (m) and Gullu (f). He is also known as "Eyup the Barber" as he worked as a barber in Turkey. There have been various spellings of his name on Australian indices including Ayup, and Eyupdas/Ayupdas,. Eyup has been described as being between 175-180cm tall, dark hair, balding at front, slim-medium build, clean shaven, about 30-35 years of age, and speaks English and Indonesian

Eyup arrived in Australia illegally on the "Tabletop" SIEV at Ashmore Reef on 13 June 1999. He told officials that his smuggler was "Murat". He applied for refugee status claiming to be persecuted due to his Kurdish ethnicity and Alevi faith. He was unsuccessful in his claim and was subsequently deported back to Turkey by Australian immigration authorities on 29 July 1999.

Eyup BASAR later came to notice during interviews of passengers who arrived on the "Draco" SIEV (Christmas Island on 20 October 2001) who claimed to have been told about an agent called Eyup BASAR and his assistant Huseyin in Turkey. The agents met Eyup and Huseyin in either "Yesilsul Park" or the Velic Bar in Gazantiep. The asking price for travel to Australia was \$6,000 USD but was negotiable. Half the money was paid in Turkey while the rest was paid to Mehmet SERIBAN in Indonesia. Tickets for travel to Indonesia were provided in Gazantiep. Some tickets were purchased from the Zohre Travel Agency 13/D Ataturk Boulevarde, Gazantiep.

Eyup BASAR also came to notice as an organiser in the SIEV 14 venture having been mentioned by four PIIs on that vessel. Three of those four PIIs are not from Adiyaman unlike the other 10 PIIs. Those four PIIs were also recruited differently to the other 10 PIIs. They dealt with a "Huseyin" and Eyup himself in Turkey. Likewise their movement patterns are also different from the other group.

They travelled to Indonesia in early 2002, well before the other Adiyaman PIIs had arrived in Indonesia (in September 2003). Those four PIIs lived in Indonesia for some time with Eyup continually promising that he would get them to another country. At some point it appears that Eyup and Mehmet collaborated and those four PIIs were added to the group from Adiyaman who were eventually to travel on SIEV 14.

Recent HS information indicates that Eyup is residing in Indonesia. He has travelled on a number of occasions between Turkey and Indonesia. On his most recent visit, reported to be in June 2004, he renewed his Indonesian visa and Turkish passport. This information has not yet been verified.

Eyup has a close associate called "Huseyin" (see profile below) who reportedly assists him in people smuggling activity. Huseyin has yet to be identified (see profile below) but was mentioned by a number of the SIEV 14 PIIs as being involved in that venture. Investigations into Eyup,s alleged involvement into SIEV 14 are continuing. The PSST has not received any recent information indicating Eyup is currently engaged in people smuggling, but relative to the other network members Eyup, together with Muslim SERIBAN, remain the most likely persons to re-commence smuggling operations.

Muslim SERIBAN
(Muslim SERIBAN, Department of Immigration photograph - 1998)

One of the principal members of this network in Turkey is Muslim SERIBAN born 5/1/57 (believed to use several aliases including "Ali"). Muslim is the older brother of Mehmet SERIBAN. He was smuggled to Australia on the "Ord" vessel at Ashmore Reef on 30 November 1998 together with Mehmet,s other older brother Vakkas SERIBAN, and also with another alleged people smuggling offender, Ali CETIN.

Like Mehmet, he claimed to be of Kurdish ethnicity. He applied for a protection visa on arrival in Australia, however, in February 1999 he advised immigration officials that he wished to be returned to Turkey. He departed Australia on 17 February 1999 and has not returned to Australia since.

HS information in March 1999 (C3) indicated that Muslim and Mehmet were organising 80 people from Gaziantep to come to Australia. Subsequent enquiries by the PSST for Operation SALVINI revealed positive photo-board identifications by PIIs on the "Isa" and "Tabletop" SIEVs.

Muslim contribution to the network is to recruit PIIs in Turkey and initiate the travel arrangements for those PIIs to get to Indonesia. As previously indicated, he mainly recruits Alevi Kurds from the Gaziantep and Adiyaman regions of Turkey. Information from illegal arrivals in Australia indicates that Muslim has a good reputation as a successful people smuggler within the Gaziantep and Adiyaman regions. In addition to recruiting passengers for the network, Muslim,s activities also include organising Turkish passports for the passengers (via a contact in Turkish Immigration), as well as their airline tickets to Indonesia via Karaoglu Turizm.

Many witnesses have indicated that a local coffee shop - the "Tul Caf" in the suburb of Kayaonu, Gaziantep is a well known meeting place used by Muslim, as is the "Karaoglu Turizm" travel agency in Kaigoz Street, Gaziantep.

In March and April 2004, Muslim was involved in an apparent attempt to smuggle three Turkish persons from the Gaziantep region to Australia. This activity has been described previously (see "Activity Since Mehmet SERIBAN,s Arrest").

Muslim is believed to be in Gaziantep. It is believed he has travelled to Indonesia on a number of occasions and reports have been received that that he has an Indonesian wife and children there. As noted previously, Muslim recently expressed a desire to head to New Zealand and that he would take three or four persons with him to fund his own journey there. The PSST has not received any recent information indicating Muslim is currently recruiting people but relative to the other network members Muslim, together with Eyup BASAR, remain the most likely persons to re-commence smuggling operations.

Bayram ASLAN - aka "Mustafa"
(nil photograph available)

Bayram ASLAN is from the village of Bardakci, central Adiyaman, Turkey. He is described as being 30-35 years of age, with dark complexion, 170 centimetres tall, black hair (one witness only). He uses the alias "Mustafa" to confuse law enforcement authorities as to his identity.

Investigations relating to SIEV 14 have indicated the Bayram had an integral role in the recruiting of passengers in and around the area of Adiyaman in Turkey, and organising airline tickets and flights to Indonesia where the arrangements would then be taken over by Mehmet SERIBAN. Evidence indicates that Bayram worked closely with both Mehmet SERIBAN and Ali CETIN on the SIEV 14 venture and he appears to have pocketed a large proportion of the funds obtained from the passengers for this venture (approximately \$30,000 USD).

Ali CETIN and Bayram ASLAN collaborated closely to recruit prospective passengers in Turkey. In effect, they each used the other as a character reference for themselves. For example, Bayram told the PIIs that they would be able to work in Ali CETIN's businesses in Australia and make several thousand American dollars in pay per month. Likewise, Ali CETIN would often meet or telephone the PIIs and tell them to trust Bayram and that they would get employment at his business in Australia. In some cases, both Bayram and Ali would update prospective passengers on the successful movements of other persons by the network, again to induce trust in the effectiveness of the network. One of the SIEV 14 PIIs, Hanifi ASLAN, is the older brother of Bayram. To persuade potential passengers that he was credible, he sometimes advertised that he was sending his own brother on the same journey. Bayram's father, Mehmet ASLAN, acted as a guarantor for Bayram after some of the PIIs asked for a guarantee on their money should they not be successful in getting to Australia.

Bayram met the PIIs at various locations in Adiyaman including the Council's Tea Garden; the Derecioglu Jewellery, Central Adiyaman (EKICI); the Yaman Tur bus stop located at the front of Governor's Office Building in Gaziantep and also travelled with some of the PIIs to Istanbul. Bayram did not travel to Indonesia on the same flight as any of the PIIs but did meet up with some of them at in Makassar. He specifically asked one of the witnesses to refer to him as "Mustafa" if the PIIs were caught by the authorities.

The above information is largely from the six statements obtained by the local Adiyaman police which were sent to the PSST via the Ministry of Justice. As a result of those statements, Bayram ASLAN was allegedly arrested by the local police (not confirmed). In late July 2004, one of the SIEV 14 PIIs stated that Bayram had been released on bail and had fled to Korea (again, not confirmed).

In addition to the above information, Mehmet SERIBAN has also told the PSST off-record, that it was Bayram ASLAN who accompanied him to hire the vessel and crew in Makassar that was used to take the PIIs to Melville Island. This has been largely corroborated by Indonesian witnesses spoken to by the PSST.

It is not known if Bayram has been involved in any other people smuggling attempts to Australia, however, information has been received that he successfully sent 10 people to Canada (F6). Enquiries by the PSST have confirmed a financial relationship between Ali CETIN and Bayram ASLAN.

"Huseyin"
(nil photograph available)

Shortly after arrival in Australia, one of the PIIs on SIEV 14 told PSST members that one of the organisers in Turkey for the venture was a person by the name of "Huseyin", described as being Turkish, mid 30's, 180cm tall, strong build, dark complexion, clean shaven and could be found at a ladies shop in Kaigoz Street Gaziantep (this is apparently also near Karaoglu Turizm).

HS information (F6) was that Eyup BASAR had a partner by the name of Huseyin KUYUN @ KUYAN (Turkish) who assisted Eyup in smuggling people to Australia. Both Huseyin and Eyup were reported as having illegally entered Australia and were subsequently deported Australia. Huseyin is described as being about 45-50 years of age. Huseyin KUYUN has not been identified through the relevant Australian authority indices. KUYUN has indicated he knows he is being sought after by law enforcement authorities.

Murat and Hakan KARAOGU @ Karaoglu Turizm
(nil photographs available)

Murat KARAOGU is related to Hakan KARAOGU (Hakan is either Murat's younger brother or nephew). They both work at Karaoglu Turizm located in Gaziantep. Murat owns this travel agency, as well as another travel agency in Ankara.

Both Murat and Hakan feature heavily in witness statements provided by PIIs on the "Ord", "Warrego", "Isa", "Tabletop", and "Gnowangerup" SIEVs. Based on those statements it appears that Murat and Hakan work closely with Mehmet SERIBAN

and others in the network. Murat and Hakan,s principal role is to organise the airline tickets to Indonesia for PIIs on behalf of the network. They over-quote the ticket prices and keep the difference as a commission,.

In a recent (June 2004) interview with Mehmet SERIBAN, he indicated that Murat KARAOGU was the primary organiser behind the "Gnowangerup" SIEV (February 2000) and other recent SIEV,s. He further indicated that both Murat and Hakan regularly checked up on the movements of the "Gnowangerup" PIIs in Indonesia. The evaluation of this information by the PSST is that Mehmet SERIBAN was attempting to downplay his own role in this venture. Nonetheless, it is clear that Murat and Hakan have a role to play in the network.

Murat was described as about 170-175cm tall, curly brown coloured hair, chubby build, 40 years of age, spoke Turkish. Hakan is described as between 165 to 170cm tall, thin, slim, late twenties, black hair very short, straight and combed to one side, he spoke Turkish. HS information (July 2004) indicates that Karaoglu Turizm is still open for business in Gaziantep. There are no persons by the name of Murat KARAOGU recorded on Australian movement records indices. There are several persons by the name of Hakan KARAOGU recorded as entering / departing Australia. The closest match to the above description is Hakan KARAOGU born 25 June 1978, an Australian citizen who is recorded as having arrived in Australia on 4 September 1999 and departed Australia on 26 April 2004. These arrival and departure dates are proximal to the date of arrival of SIEV 14 in Australia and the later arrest of Mehmet SERIBAN. It is not known whether this person is the same Hakan as described by the witnesses (who appears to be a Turkish citizen).

Indonesian Persons of Interest "Hayril"

"Hayril the Indonesian" met at least two of the SIEV 14 persons at Jakarta airport and took them to a hotel. Hayril took them to the airport and bought airline tickets for those persons.

"Hayril" has come to notice before. He met a group of PIIs that had been organised by Mehmet SERIBAN to travel to Indonesia to be smuggled to Canada. One of those PIIs was a person who had previously attempted to enter Australia illegally on a vessel organised by Mehmet SERIBAN but whom was deported by Australian immigration authorities to Turkey. On this occasion Hayril had a note from SERIBAN saying "This is Mehmet, pay USD700 to the man who shows this note". SERIBAN was contacted and he told the PII that the money would paid to the police. Hayril has not been identified.

"Johnny" aka "Jack"

Johnny also known as Jack is alleged by various witnesses on the "Warrego", "Isa", "Tabletop", and "Gnowangerup" boats as assisting Mehmet SERIBAN in organising their journey to Australia. He is described as an Indonesian having a noticeable scar on one side of his face, chubby build, shoulder length hair, only speaks Indonesian. Johnny has not been identified.

"Osman"

Osman is an Indonesian national whom Mehmet SERIBAN claimed during a recent interview with PSST members as assisting him in bribing police officers at Maumere, FLORES, re the "Gnowangerup" venture. Off-record, SERIBAN has said that Osman is engaged in other people smuggling activities. Osman is SERIBAN,s spelling of his Indonesian name (eg, phonetic).

Phone Numbers

Bayram ASLAN - suspected of using Turkish phone number 05373327446

Eyup BASAR - suspected of using Indonesian phone numbers 08179241594, 08179215163, 0817880218, and 081320340846

Ali CETIN - known to be currently using Australian phone numbers 0419496789, 0419902342, 0299682495.

"Hayril" - recorded on Mehmet SERIBAN,s phone with the Indonesian mobile number 08158248744

Mehmet SERIBAN - suspected of using the following Indonesia phone numbers: 08179220273, 081524040304, 08194107482, and 08179257231. His previous Australian phone numbers are known to the PSST.

Muslim SERIBAN - in 2001 was believed to be using Indonesian
phone number 0817207342.

DATE OF REPORT: 2 AUGUST 2004
EDELMAN